



Center for Clinical Standards and Quality/Survey & Certification Group

Admin Info: 14-12-NH

DATE: January 24, 2014

TO: State Survey Agency Directors

FROM: Director
Survey and Certification Group

SUBJECT: Electronic Health Records (EHRs) –Requesting State Survey Agency (SA)
Assessment of Challenges Encountered in Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs)
Using EHRs

Memorandum Summary

- ***EHRs in SNFs*** – The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) would like to identify barriers and challenges surveyors may encounter when they survey facilities that have implemented full or partial EHR systems. Identification of these barriers and challenges will enable CMS to provide clearer guidance to surveyors.
- ***Requesting SA Assessment:*** We are asking SAs to complete the brief on-line survey at the following link to tell us what issues they have identified when they survey facilities that have implemented EHRs: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SNF-EHR>. The deadline for responding is February 14, 2014.

Background

Review of medical records is an important part of the CMS survey process for SNFs. Surveyors encounter an increasing number of SNFs that use a variety of EHR systems. While SNFs are not required to implement EHR systems, many facilities implement EHR systems to provide immediate access to records, improve legibility of orders and notes, enable communication across provider types, and provide clinical decision support and safety mechanisms. Performing the review of EHRs presents a number of new challenges to surveyors which may include how to access the EHR system, location of facility computers, and navigating through each EHR system.

Request

We are asking all State long-term care surveyors to complete a brief on-line survey to identify and describe barriers and challenges they have encountered when conducting surveys of SNFs with EHR systems. We will use this information to provide better assistance and guidance to surveyors for the record review portion of the survey process. The survey should take

approximately 10 minutes to complete and you may access the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SNF-EHR> until February 14, 2014.

Questions concerning this memorandum may be addressed to Cathleen Lawrence at Cathleen.lawrence@cms.hhs.gov. We appreciate your assistance in identifying issues for surveyors when they evaluate SNFs that use EHR systems.

/s/
Thomas E. Hamilton

cc: Survey and Certification Regional Office Management